[House Bill, No. 107.]

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, January 5, 1864.—Read first and second times. February 1, 1864.—Engrossed, read a third time and passed.

A. R. LAMAR, *Clerk.*

SENATE, February 2, 1864.—Read first and second times, and referred to Committee on Military Affairs. Feb. 5, 1864.—Reported without amendment. Feb 12, 1864.—Postponed to, and made special order for, to-morrow at 11 1-2 o'clock, and ordered to be printed.

A BILL

To increase the efficiency of the army, by the employment of free negroes and slaves in certain capacities.

Whereas, The efficiency of the army is greatly diminished by the withdrawal from the ranks of able-bodied soldiers to act as teamsters, and in various other capacities in which free negroes and slaves might be advantageously employed; therefore,

The Congress of the Confederate States of America do enact, That all male free negroes and other free persons of color, not including those who are free under the treaty of Paris, of 1803, or under the treaty with Spain, of 1819, resident in the Confederate States, between the ages of eighteen and fifty years, shall be held liable to perform such duties with the army, or in connection with the military defences of the country, in the way of work upon fortifications, or in Government works, for the pro-

duction or preparation of material of war, or in military hospitals, as the Secretary of War may, from time to time, prescribe; and, while engaged in the performance of such duties, shall receive rations and clothing, and compensation at the rate of eleven dollars a month, under such rules and regulations as the said Secretary may establish: *Provided*, That the Secretary of War, with the approval of the President, may exempt from the operations of this act such free negroes as the interest of the country may require should be exempted, or such as he may think proper to exempt on grounds of justice, equity or necessity.

SEC. 2. That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to employ, for duties similar to those indicated in the preceding section of this act, as many male negro slaves, not to exceed twenty thousand, as, in his judgment, the wants of the service may require, furnishing them, while so employed, with proper rations and clothing, under rules and regulations to be established by him, and paying to the owner of said slaves, such wages as may be agreed upon with said owners for their use and service; and, in the event of the loss of any slaves, while so employed, by the act of the enemy, or by escape to the enemy, or by death inflicted by the enemy, or by disease contracted while in any service required of said slaves, then the owners of the same shall be entitled to receive the full value of such slaves, to be ascertained by agree-

ment, or by appraisement under the laws regulating impressment, to be paid under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of War may establish.

SEC. 3. That when the Secretary of War shall be unable to procure the service of slaves in any military department, in sufficient numbers for the necessities of the department upon the terms and conditions set forth in the preceding section, then he is hereby authorized to impress the services of as many male slaves, not to exceed twenty thousand, as may be required, from time to time, to discharge the duties indicated in the first section of this act, according to laws regulating impressment of slaves in other cases: *Provided*, That slaves so impressed shall, while employed, receive the same rations and clothing, in kind and quantity, as slaves regularly hired from their owners, and, in the event of their loss, shall be paid for in the same manner and under the same rules established by the said impressment laws: *Provided*, That, if the owner have but one male slave within the age of eighteen and fifty, he shall not be impressed against the will of the owner: *Provided, further*, That free negroes shall be first impressed, and, if there should be a deficiency, it shall be supplied by the impressment of slaves, according to the foregoing provisions: *Provided, further*, That, in making the impressment, not more than one of every five male slaves, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, shall be taken from any owner.

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